

NST : Medicine: Hand over dispensing role to pharmacists

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FOR the past few years, the Consumers Association of Penang has been calling for dispensing rights to be fully handed over to pharmacists while doctors concentrate on their prescribing role. We understand that the Health Ministry is not against this.

It may be that the shortage of pharmacists once prevented this move from being implemented. But we believe the situation has now improved with the increase in the number of pharmacists.

There may still be a lack of pharmacists in certain parts of the country, especially in the rural areas. However, it is still possible for this system to be implemented in stages.

It can be started in some of the major towns like Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Baru where the concentration of pharmacists is high.

Measures can be carried out to gradually extend this service to the remaining areas. This will give the ministry time to iron out teething problems.

Once the separation of dispensing rights has been initiated, pharmacists will be encouraged to set up pharmacies in areas where there is presently a lack. CAP would like the ministry to initiate the separation of prescribing and dispensing rights without further delay.